

# *Postings: from the Desk of Jim Brodrick*

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The 2009 winners of the Next Generation Luminaires™ (NGL) design competition were announced last week at the Strategies in Light conference in sunny Santa Clara, CA - worlds away from snowy, frigid Washington, DC. For a complete listing of winning products along with their descriptions, visit the [NGL website](#). The doubling of the numbers over the 2008 competition - 47 winners out of 126 entries in 2009, compared with 22 of 68 in 2008 - reflects the traction NGL has gained in just its second year, as more and more people in the lighting community recognize it as a valuable tool.

The U.S. Department of Energy, along with the International Association of Lighting Designers and the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, launched Next Generation Luminaires to help lighting designers and specifiers sort the wheat from the chaff in the face of a tidal wave of LED lighting products flooding onto the market. Some of these products are quite good, but many are not, and relying on product literature to make the distinction is risky business, since [CALiPER testing](#) has shown that such information is often inaccurate or misleading.

That's where design competitions like NGL come in, by shining a spotlight (no pun intended) on products that really "walk the walk." The idea is to identify well-designed, attractive LED luminaires that use a fraction of the electricity consumed by standard fixtures and that can be specified with confidence for commercial applications (while NGL's companion competition, [Lighting for Tomorrow](#), focuses on residential applications).

But the philosophy behind Next Generation Luminaires is different from that of most competitions, in that the goal is not to salute a few lucky winners and relegate all other entries to wannabe status. That wouldn't give specifiers and consumers a very wide range of choices. Instead, any entry that passes muster on each of the stringent evaluation criteria receives the judges' recognition, which means they

would recommend the product to other specifiers.

Gaining NGL recognition is no easy matter, as can be attested to by all of the entries (63% of them) that fell short in 2009. The 12 judges, seven of whom were lighting designers, were extremely tough on the products they evaluated. They carefully pored through the extensive documentation that was required of each entry, which ranged from an LM-79-08 test report, to a dimming interface specification sheet, to a product warranty statement. And they rolled up their sleeves and put each product through its paces across a whole range of key parameters, including color appearance, color rendering, illuminance, luminance, application effectiveness, appearance, and serviceability.

That last parameter is one that often gets overlooked, despite the fact that it's extremely important, especially to the people such as lighting designers and electrical contractors, who have to answer to the owners or end users. Because of SSL's complexity, replacing an LED lighting product or component could be a tricky matter that ends up offsetting the savings from energy efficiency and long lifetime. That's why the NGL judges pay close attention to such questions as how installable a product is, and how it will be serviced.

Of the 47 products recognized as specifiable in the 2009 NGL competition, four received an additional distinction as Best in Class: Finelite Inc.'s CURVE portable desk lamp, SPILIGHTING Inc.'s Stile Styk wall-washer, the Evolve™ LED R150 roadway luminaire by GE Lighting Solutions, and the VizorLED parking garage light from Philips Wide-Lite. Best in Class means the product stood out from all others in its category and also received the top ranking on a majority of the evaluation parameters.

Not every NGL lighting category had a Best in Class in 2009, but this wasn't necessarily a bad thing. If the quality of the recognized entries in a category was so consistently high overall as to make it unfair to single any one of them out, then there was no Best in Class. This was the case, for example, with downlights, a category that had six recognized products, all of which were quite good.

My congratulations to all of the 2009 Next Generation Luminaires winners. I invite everyone to visit the NGL website to learn more about these products and about the competition.

As always, if you have questions or comments, you can reach me at

[postings@lightingfacts.com](mailto:postings@lightingfacts.com).

James R. Brodrick

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